

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3948

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: REACTION TO SOCIALIST CONGRESS WITHIN CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

SUMMARY: SOCIALIST CONGRESS SEEN BY MANY IN DC AS CLOSING
DOOR TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST ACCORD PRIOR TO NEW
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. DC SOURCES GENERALLY AGREE THAT
PSI CONGRESS RESULTS MAKE EARLY ELECTIONS PROBABLE, EITHER
IN JUNE OR IN THE FALL. RISK OF EARLY ELECTIONS IS ALREADY
INFLUENCING DC CONGRESS PREPARATIONS. EMPHASIS WITHIN DIVIDED
PARTY MAY BE SHIFTING TO URGE FOR PRE-ELECTORAL UNITY AND
SHELIVING OF TOUGHER ISSUES SUCH AS GENERATIONAL RENEWAL. END
SUMMARY.

1. IN PUBLIC COMMENTS FOLLOWING SOCIALIST CONGRESS, A NUMBER
OF DC LEADERS FROM CENTER-LEFT (ANTONIOZZI) TO RIGHT (SCAL-
FARO) WITHIN THE PARTY HAVE EXPRESSED DISILLUSIONMENT AND IR-
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RITATION WITH RESULTS OF PSI CONGRESS. BASIC THEME IS

THAT SOCIALISTS, HAVING CAUSED DESTABILIZING GOVERNMENT CRISIS, NOW REFUSE TO DECIDE IN FAVOR OF COOPERATION WITH EITHER THE DC OR THE COMMUNISTS PRIOR TO NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT PSI HAS CREATED SITUATION IN WHICH EARLY ELECTIONS INEVITABLE. THESE SOURCES BELIEVE THAT MOST LIKELY TIMING FOR EARLY ELECTIONS IS MID-JUNE, IN NAMMER TO AVOID THREAT OF ABORTION REFERENDUM AND POSTPONE SCHEDULED LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SEVERAL LARGE CITIES INCLUDING ROME AND GENOA. OTHER SOURCES FROM LABOR UNION RANKS AND OTHER PARTIES AGREE THAT EARLY ELECTIONS ARE PROBABLY UNAVOIDABLE, BUT THINK MORE LIKELY TIMING IS OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER.

3. IMPACT OF EARLY ELECTION THREAT IS ALREADY BEING FELT WITHIN DC AS PARTY LEADERS PREPARE FOR MARCH 18-22 CONGRESS. DEEP DIVISIONS WITHIN PARTY STILL APPARENT BOTH BETWEEN AND WITHIN MAJOR GROUPINGS SUPPORTING ZACCAGNINI AND FORLANI. HOWEVER, DC TRIBAL URGE TO CLOSE RANKS PRIOR TO ELECTORAL BATTLE (WHICH SHOWED ITSELF WHEN GOVERNMENT CRISIS BROKE IN EARLY JANUARY) IS BEGINNING TO REASSERT ITSELF. DC SOURCES SINCE PSI CONGRESS HAVE TALKED INCREASINGLY ABOUT NEED TO UNIFY AROUND SINGLE CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARYSHIP. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO SEE WHETHER "ZAC" OR FORLANI (OR MORO) WILL BENEFIT MOST FROM THESE UNITARY STRIVINGS, CHANCES THAT DC WILL PULL ITSELF TOGETHER AT CONGRESS AHVE BEEN INCREASED. ON NEGATIVE SIDE OF LEDGER, HOWEVER, IS LIKELIHOOD THAT PREELECTORAL UNITY IS MOST LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED IF CONGRESS PUSHES TO BACK BURNER MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES SUCH AS GENERATIONAL RENEWAL. VOLPE

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